

What is claimed is:

1. A disposable article configured to be worn over and about the lower torso of a wearer, the article comprising:
 - a) a containment assembly having a first longitudinal edge and a second longitudinal edge opposed thereof, a first end edge and a second end edge opposed thereto, the first and the second longitudinal edges being configured to contact the legs of the wearer, and the first and the second end edges being structured and configured to contact the waist of the wearer; and
 - b) at least one side panel carried by the containment assembly and extending outwardly from the first longitudinal edge of the containment assembly adjacent the first end edge of the containment assembly, the at least one side panel including an inner region having at least one discontinuity for dividing a tensile force applied to the at least one side panel into a waist-directing force and a leg-directing force.
2. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 1 wherein the at least one side panel further includes a waist region and a leg region separated therefrom by the at least one discontinuity, the waist region is configured to transmit the waist-directing force, and the leg region is configured to transmit the leg-directing force.
3. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 2 wherein the leg region and the waist region diverge from each other in a direction from an outer panel of the side panel toward a longitudinal centerline of the containment assembly.
4. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 2 wherein the waist region has an extensibility varying from about 5 g/mm to about 50 g/mm and the leg region has an extensibility varying from about 1 g/mm to about 30 g/mm.

5. The disposable article in accordance with claim 2 wherein the waist region has a greater width than the leg region.
6. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 2 wherein the at least one discontinuity is defined by at least one cut line.
7. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 6 wherein the at least one cut line is rectilinear.
8. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 6 wherein the at least one cut line is disposed substantially parallel with a first lateral edge of the side panel.
9. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 2 wherein the at least one discontinuity includes at least one opening.
10. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 9 wherein the at least one opening is defined by a substantially triangular open area or a substantially rectangular open area or a substantially trapezoidal open area.
11. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 2 wherein the at least one discontinuity is defined by a plurality of cut lines.
12. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 11 wherein the plurality of cut lines includes three spaced cut lines.
13. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 12 wherein a first cut line extends substantially parallel to a lateral centerline of the side panel, a second cut line extends substantially parallel to the first lateral edge of the side panel, and a third cut line extends substantially parallel to a second lateral edge of the side panel.

14. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 6 wherein the at least one cut line is curvilinear.
15. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 11 wherein the plurality of cut lines is disposed to define a substantially triangular array of spaced, curvilinear cut lines.
16. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 2 wherein the waist-directing force in the waist region of the side panel extends at an angle ranging from about 0° to about 45° relative to a lateral centerline of the disposable article, and wherein the leg-directing force in the leg region of the side panel extends at an angle ranging from about 10° to about 35° relative to the lateral centerline of the disposable article.
17. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 2 wherein the waist-directing force in the waist region of the side panel extends at an angle ranging from about 10° to about 15° relative to a lateral centerline of the disposable article, and wherein the leg-directing force in the leg region of the side panel extends at an angle ranging from about 20° to about 30° relative to the lateral centerline of the disposable article.
18. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 2 wherein the side panel has an extensibility ranging from about 1 g/mm to about 50 g/mm.
19. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 2 wherein the side panel is elastic and has an elasticity of at least about 5 %.
20. The disposable article in accordance with Claim 2 further including a fastener for releasable engagement of the at least one side panel with a surface of the

containment assembly adjacent the second end edge of the disposable article for retaining the disposable article in an operative position on the body of the wearer.